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**TURKMENISTAN**

## CASE STUDY

# Training and Resources for Health Care

### **USAID programs strengthen family medicine services and health care management in Turkmenistan**



An FMTC training session.  
Photo: AIHA

***"Our goal is to supply our trainees with current information on the most effective primary health care practices, while at the same time helping these professionals build new programs and services rooted in evidence-based medicine."***

- FMTC Director Guldzhakhan Annamedova

#### **Challenge**

Turkmenistan began reforming its primary health care sector at independence in 1993. At that time, many Turkmen specialists were appointed to be general medical practitioners without proper training, which often resulted in poor treatment standards and incorrect diagnoses.

#### **Initiative**

In 1998, at the request of the Government of Turkmenistan, USAID began retraining family practitioners through the Health Partnerships Program, implemented by the American International Health Alliance (AIHA). The program founded the Family Medicine Training Center (FMTC), where health care trainers instruct Ashgabat City doctors and nurses on skills-based, practical family medicine. The curriculum covers such topics as the principles of primary health care, infection control, pediatrics, women's health, clinical management, diabetes, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, pulmonary and cardiac health, nutrition, and common behavioral health issues. The USAID program developed the training curriculum, provided extensive U.S.-based training to the instructors of the center, and equipped the FMTC with computers and other office equipment, furniture, internet connection, and various clinical and non-clinical training aids.

The USAID Health Partnerships Program also assisted in opening two Learning Resource Centers, which promote and support improvements in healthcare practices and behaviors by increasing access to health information and by providing health professionals with the skills and tools to critically appraise and apply information in practical settings. In addition, the program has helped create a Health Management Training Center and assisted Turkmen professionals in adopting international guidelines and setting standards on the organization of health management education; developing training programs; and incorporating evidence-based strategies in curriculum.

#### **Results:**

To date, 287 Turkmen physicians and 300 nurses have been fully trained in family medicine. The training program is based on an innovative four-week module for eight nurses and eight doctors, where doctors and nurses work in pairs. One doctor from Ahal Velayat (region) said: "We've never seen such training materials. This training is really innovative, and helps a lot to improve our practical skills and our theoretical knowledge!" The FMTC has been so successful that the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan requested USAID's assistance with the opening of a second Family Medicine Training Center to train doctors and nurses from outside of Ashgabat. With USAID support, the new center began operating in December 2005.